

Child and Family Services Update

June 2006

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Snippets from the Director

By Richard Anderson

In Search of Our Best

Years ago, early in my administrative assignments in Child and Family Services, I became enamored by business research on how to accomplish greatness for people like us, that work hard every day at becoming better at what we do. That search led me to a book entitled, "In Search of Excellence". Two persons were allowed to leave their company to go out and extensively explore the most successful Fortune 500 companies in America. Can you imagine being given a year or two to just go to the best systems and study what makes them successful? These two persons were commissioned to take back what they had learned so their company would have all the best ideas and most effective approaches that existed at that time.

About nine years ago, we set out to find the best practices, create the best practices if they did not exist, and then apply these best practices directly in our work. We, like those two lucky corporate employees from "In Search of Excellence", have been traveling through an exciting era of learning in Utah child welfare history. We are creating the very discipline that the child welfare profession has needed since its beginning as a specialization around forty years ago. We now have a planned, organized, goal-oriented system of continuous improvement, with solid data (which I presented to you in last year's statewide meetings) to prove our positive achievements and to know where we need improvements. All around us are evidences that we are a system moving on an excellence track, leading to the delivery of the best services for the most vulnerable of our state's citizens.

Please send your
comments, suggestions,
and/or submissions for
the Update to
CAROLMILLER@utah.gov

There has long been a need in our nation for child welfare services to move away from a crisis mode of management—even though we deal with crisis every day (and maybe our systems were matching the same reactive mode which we often are confronted with in our work). Very often, I hear from those inside and outside our state about how you are showing many others in the nation that the enormous metamorphosis from a reactive system to a proactive system can actually happen, and that a well disciplined ever-improving child welfare system can actually be achieved. I was recently approached after a family team meeting by one of our community partners who told me that he was asked by his administration why he spent so much time with Child and Family Services. He went on to tell me that he was learning so much from our staff and that the atmosphere was invigorating and helped promote him to become a better professional in his agency.

Next month we start another upward climb in our pursuit to go where no child welfare system has ever gone. Please know that our goal is not to be seen as the best, just to be the best for the children and families we serve and the communities that rely upon us to keep children safe from abuse and neglect, while helping families to provide this safety themselves. We want the best skills, the most responsiveness, the best partnerships, and the best attitudes. I want each of us to have, in an individual and personal way, growth toward professional excellence. You may not see it in yourself, but others do. I see it in you every time I meet with you.



Development

New Medicaid Coverage Coming in July for Youth Leaving Child and Family Services Foster Care

Cosette Mills, Federal Revenue Manager

Starting July 1, 2006, youth who leave Child and Family Services foster care after reaching age 18 years will qualify for Medicaid coverage until the month of their 21st birthday. Youth must be U.S. citizens or meet requirements for documented aliens. Youth will continue to qualify for this coverage regardless of income or asset levels. It's very important that caseworkers provide Child and Family Services eligibility workers with completed Medicaid forms prior to a youth's leaving Child and Family Services custody so that Medicaid coverage can continue uninterrupted. (Eligibility workers will give caseworkers the required forms to complete.)

Youth who were previously in Child and Family Services custody may also qualify for this coverage until they reach age 21 years, if they were in foster care on their 18th birthday. (Coverage cannot be made retroactive prior to July 1, 2006.) Applications for this coverage will be made through the Bureau of Eligibility Services, with Child and



Family Services providing written verification that the youth was in Child and Family Services foster care on their 18th birthday.

If you have questions regarding this new Medicaid program, please contact Linda Moon at (801) 538-4258, Cosette Mills at (801) 538-4058, or Pam Russell at (801) 538-4308.

Partnership



Easter Egg Hunt!

By Pamela Russell, Transition to Adult Living Program Manager

The 1st Annual Transition to Adult Living Easter Egg Hunt was held in Western Region and was awesome! This was originally brainstormed by our Youth Leadership Council Presidency who wanted to give the younger kids in foster care an activity to do. We had between 60 and 70 kids there, as well as many foster families, adoptive families, and bio families (probably 100+ people total).

A couple of the families used this activity for a weekly family visit. The weather was not that great...we had a lot of wind and a little rain, but that did not dampen the spirits of the kids.

We had four different hunts...one for each age group of 0-5, 6-10, 10-13, and 14 years and older. The best was to watch the teens (22 of them) line up and run for the eggs. This was planned as a community service project, so we had each of the teens team up with the younger kids and help them hunt for the eggs. It was a little technical, since we had eggs that had both candy and tickets for prizes, and we wanted them to each get a certain number of eggs. The teens were great to help with this, and I saw many of them come out of their shell (no pun intended!) and have a great time with the younger kids.

This was one of the best-attended activities that we have had. It was great to see the way our teens focused on helping the others that were there.

Thanks to all the caseworkers for helping us get this advertised and encouraging your children and families to be there. Western Region has activities each month for our teens to attend.



An Unexpected Teaming Opportunity

By Dawn Hollingsworth, Domestic Violence Program Manager

The other day while I was getting my hair cut, my stylist asked me what I did for a living. After I explained that I work with families who have experienced domestic violence, he said, "I have been blessed with this new salon, and it is time for me to give back to the community." As a result of this conversation, Studio H₂O is donating a "day of pampering" to 15 women who have fallen prey to domestic violence. They will receive a haircut by a master stylist and a luxury pedicure.

This experience taught me that everyone has something they can give back to their community. Sharing what we do for a living and teaming with people we wouldn't normally think of as resources such as mechanics, plumbers, lawn care businesses, Laundromats, and others can reap tremendous benefits to the children and families that we serve. Most folks have a desire to serve but just don't know how to go about it.

A big thank you to Studio H₂O, located at the Gateway, for their compassionate, creative contribution. We would love to hear your stories of teaming with local businesses or individuals that have provided a creative resource to our children and families. Please send stories to Carol Miller at CAROLMILLERQ@utah.gov. Sharing your partnership successes benefits all of us.

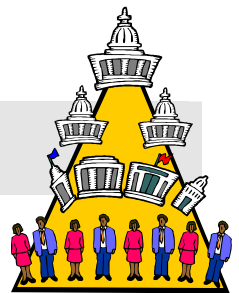
Organizational Competence

Imminent Risk of Removal Documentation for In-Home Cases

Cosette Mills, Federal Revenue Manager

A recent change in Federal law is requiring workers on in-home cases to document every six months if children are at imminent risk of removal (i.e., meaning that according to our best judgment, if in-home services aren't effective, the plan for the child is foster care). SAFE programming is now being developed to enable this to be documented as part of the wizard for opening in-home cases. This should be implemented near the first of the fiscal year, and will require this documentation to be completed for children on all in-home cases that are open at that time. Additional details and training will be offered at that time.

Unfortunately, Congress made the law effective retroactively, meaning that we need to comply with the law beginning October 1, 2005. Child and Family Services administration is looking for the best way to gather the data after-the-fact. In the near future, workers who have had in-home cases since October should expect to be contacted to provide us with this information. We will make every effort to make this process as easy for workers as possible. A prompt response to this data request will be greatly appreciated.



Meeting this requirement is important in order for Child and Family Services to obtain essential funding to help support our work with children to prevent entry or reentry into foster care. Please contact Cosette Mills at (801) 538-4058 or cwmills@utah.gov if you would like additional information.



Random Moment Sample (RMS) Process Improvements Coming in July

Cosette Mills, Federal Revenue Manager

Beginning July 1, 2006, Child and Family Services will see changes in the Random Moment Sample (RMS) process. For anyone who isn't familiar with our RMS, it's a process where we periodically ask caseworkers and their supervisors what they're working on at a specific moment. We tabulate everyone's answers, and the results tell us what portion of work effort is spent in which service areas. The results are important to Child and Family Services because they form the basis for claiming funds from the Federal government to help pay for administrative costs, such as worker salaries.

Workers will continue to be notified by email of the date and time selected for the sample. The change in process pertains primarily to responding to the sample. Instead of a worker typing answers and replying by email, under the new system workers will click on a link in the email that takes them to a website. Workers will be asked if they are working on a case, and will click on yes or no. If yes, the worker will type in the client name or "O" number. Next, workers will be asked to select from a drop-down list the service area they are working in (such as CPS, Out-of-Home, In-Home, Adoption, or Domestic Violence). Finally, workers will select from a drop-down list the activity they are doing at the time of the sample.

This new process will improve efficiency and accuracy as workers directly select the appropriate answers to the sample. It will also make the results readily available to administration.

The changes we're implementing will update the method of selecting workers for the sample from the Human Resources records, so hopefully, this will reduce the number of situations where workers receive multiple sample emails within a short period of time, followed by long periods without being sampled.

In mid-June, all workers who participate in the RMS will be sent a practice email to familiarize them with the new process. *Please watch for and promptly reply to the practice email when it comes in June.* Contact Cosette Mills at (801) 538-4058 or cwmills@utah.gov if you have questions about the Child and Family Services RMS process.

Professional Competence

Transition to Adult Living Orientation

Pamela Russell, Transition to Adult Living Program Manager



The Transition to Adult Living (TAL) program builds on the youth's individual strengths and develops personal assets in order to help young people acquire the motivation and the means to be successful throughout their lives. Child and

Family Services is working towards the goal that "all youth who exit care will live successfully as adults."

An orientation about the new TAL Practice Guidelines provides caseworkers and supervisors who work with youth age 14 years and older with a concrete guide towards best practice. This orientation is required for all caseworkers/supervisors who have or have the potential for youth 14 years or older on their caseloads.

The TAL Practice Guideline Orientation will provide all caseworkers/supervisors who serve these youth with an overview of changes and expectations.

ORIENTATION DATES:

Northern Region and Southwest Region - TBA

Western Region

May 2, 2006 – Spanish Fork (2 sessions) 10:00 – 12:00 and 1:00 – 3:00

Eastern Region

May 1, 2006 – Roosevelt

May 30, 2006 Price/Castle Dale

May 31, 2006 – Moab/Blanding

Salt Lake Valley Region

May 10, 2006 (2 sessions) 9:00 – 11:00 and 1:00 – 3:00. Both sessions are at 1385 S. State Street DCFS Office

May 23, 2006 - Oquirrh Office

Please contact your Training Coordinator for exact times and locations. If you were unable to attend the sessions held in your area, please contact me at 801-538-4308 so we can see about facilitating a make-up session for you.